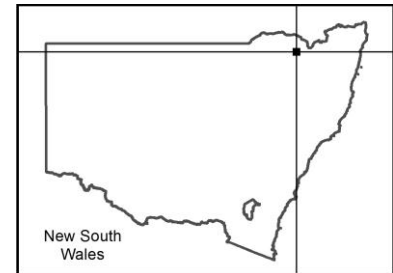


# Statement of Management Intent



## Arakoola Nature Reserve

### 1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Arakoola Nature Reserve. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the reserve until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#), states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the ['precautionary principle' \(see Principle 15\)](#).

### 2. Management principles

Nature reserves are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas containing outstanding, unique or representative ecosystems, species, communities or natural phenomena. Under the Act ([Section 30J](#)), nature reserves are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, and protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- promote public appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of the reserve's natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

The primary purpose of nature reserves is to conserve nature. Nature reserves differ from national parks in that they do not have the provision of visitor use as a management purpose or principle.

### 3. Context

**Reservation details:** Arakoola Nature Reserve was reserved on 12 March 1999.

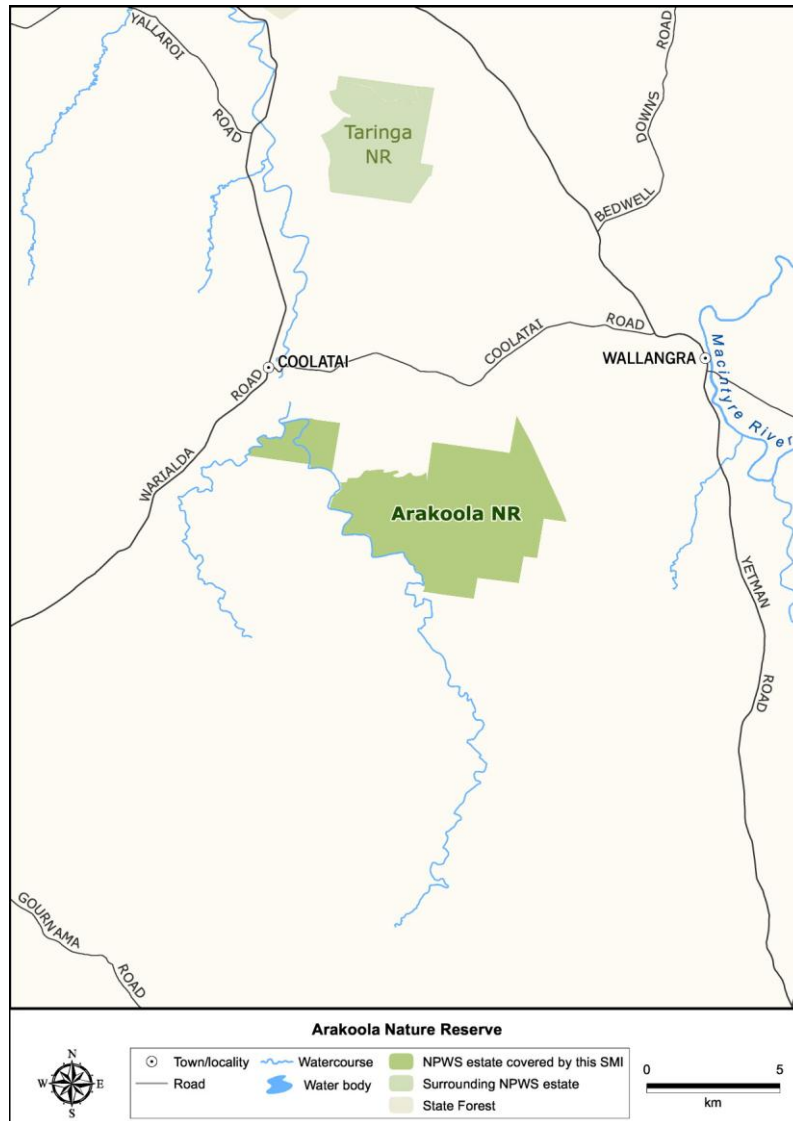
**Size:** 3180 hectares.

Arakoola Nature Reserve is located 25 kilometres west of Ashford and two kilometres south-east of Coolatai. It is located in both the Nandewar and Brigalow Belt South bioregions and within the administrative areas of Toomelah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and Inverell Shire Council. A small area in the western part of the reserve falls within the North West Local Land Services and Gwydir Shire Council areas.

Located at the northern end of Mastermans Range it supports a significant portion of the remaining uncleared vegetation on the range. The majority of the reserve is hilly, ranging in altitude from 380 metres above sea level at the junction of Ottleys and Spring creeks to 560 metres above sea level.

Sandstone overhangs and large sandstone outcrops occur throughout the reserve especially along the creeklines.

Formerly private property, the reserve comprises two portions approximately 500 metres apart and separated by private land. The larger eastern portion is approximately 2820 hectares and the smaller western portion is approximately 360 hectares. Ottleys Creek bisects the western portion and forms the western boundary of the eastern portion.



The vegetation communities are dominated by weeping bottle brush (*Callistemon viminalis*) and river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) along the creeklines and yellow box (*E. melliodora*), rough-barked apple (*Angophora floribunda*) and *Acacia pendula* on the alluvial flats. The sandstone areas are characterised by smooth-barked apple (*Angophora leiocarpa*), tumbledown red gum (*E. dealbata*), narrow-leaved ironbark (*E. crebra*) silver-leaved ironbark (*E. melanophloia*), long-fruited bloodwood (*Corymbia dolichocarpa*), red stringybark (*E. macrorhyncha*), white box (*E. albens*), kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*), white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) and black cypress pine (*C. endlicheri*).

The sandstone ridges are dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark and white cypress pine while the sandstone/basalt intergrade is dominated by mugga ironbark (*E. sideroxylon*), white box and white cypress pine. The basalt caps are dominated by white box, silver-leaved ironbark, white cypress pine, wilga (*Geijera parviflora*) and butterbush (*Pittosporum phylliraeoides*). The varied vegetation

communities with massive rock outcrops and gullies provides ideal habitat for a range of fauna species.

#### 4. Values

- The reserve provides an important habitat for 15 threatened species, 5 birds, 8 mammals and 2 reptiles. These are black-chinned honeyeater (eastern subspecies) (*Melithreptus gularis gularis*), little lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*), speckled warbler (*Chthonicola sagittata*), turquoise parrot (*Neophema pulchella*), varied sittella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*), Corben's long-eared bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*), eastern bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis*), eastern cave bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*), grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), little pied bat (*Chalinolobus picatus*), squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*), yellow-bellied sheath-tail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*), border thick-tailed gecko (*Underwoodisaurus sphyrurus*) and zigzag velvet gecko (*Oedura rhombifer*).
- The protected migratory bird species white-throated needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*) and rainbow bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) have been recorded in the reserve.
- Threatened flora species recorded in the reserve include austral toadflax (*Thesium australe*), bluegrass (*Dichanthium setosum*), and scant pomaderris (*Pomaderris queenslandica*).
- The grassy white box vegetation type within the reserve includes a small area consistent with the endangered ecological community White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland.
- Heritage sites associated with past pastoral use of the reserve include a station homestead and shearing shed complex of high local significance. Of State Heritage significance is the 'Chinese fence', a lattice style wire fence along the reserve's eastern boundary which was handmade by Chinese labour gangs in the 1870s.
- The reserve is located within the land significant to the Gamilaroi People. An Aboriginal Heritage Assessment of Arakoola Nature Reserve (English 2000) identified over 30 sites including campsites, grinding grove sites, shelters and other isolated finds.
- The reserve has few visitors with no public vehicle access or visitor facilities. Camping, picnicking, bushwalking and swimming facilities are provided at nearby Kwiambal National Park, located on the Severn and Macintyre rivers.

#### 5. Issues

- Feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*), foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), feral cats (*Felis catus*), feral goats (*Capra hircus*), rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and wild dogs (*Canis lupus* spp.) are present in the reserve. Pigs and foxes are of most concern in relation to their impact on reserve values.
- A number of weed species are known to occur including coolatai grass (*Hyparrhenia hirta*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*), prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp) and *Xanthium* spp.
- There are issues with boundary fencing in some areas and occasionally cattle and stock from neighbouring properties stray into the reserve. The lattice style wire fence must be maintained in accordance with a conservation management plan.

#### 6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Arakoola Nature Reserve [Fire Management Strategy](#). The strategy identifies an asset protection zone for the lattice style wire fence.

- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the [NPWS Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Northern Tablelands Region. Priorities for the reserve include wild dog and fox control. As well, feral pigs and goats, willows, peach and tree of heaven will be controlled to protect the rough barked apple-bottlebrush creeklines and white box basalt woodlands.
- Historic heritage sites will be maintained in accordance with a conservation management plan.
- Aboriginal cultural sites will be managed taking into account the recommendations in the Aboriginal Heritage Assessment report and in consultation with the Toomelah LALC.
- Engagement with the LALC, Aboriginal Elders and community groups regarding the management of the reserve will continue.
- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors, to protect wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets
- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the on-going management objectives for the reserve. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the on-going conservation of the reserve by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this reserve or this statement, contact the NPWS Tenterfield Office on (02) 6736 4298 or 10 Miles Street, Tenterfield NSW 2372.

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**Disclaimer:** This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the reserve prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the reserve's location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

Published by:

Office of Environment and Heritage  
59 Goulburn Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232  
Phone: (02) 9995 5000

ISBN 978 1 74359 419 3  
OEH 2014/0107  
June 2014